

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 003548

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. BRITAIN SPECULATES ON LONDON VENUE FOR ECONOMIC
SUMMIT

PRESIDENT GISCARD'S JANUARY 4 STATEMENT THAT THE UK MAY
HOST THE NEXT ECONOMIC SUMMIT HAS PROVOKED A FLURRY OF
COMMENTS IN LONDON. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY LONDON, THE
BRITISH PRESS HAS SPECULATED THAT PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN
WILL VISIT PRESIDENT CARTER IN FEBRUARY, AND THAT SUMMIT
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PLANS WILL HEAD THEIR AGENDA. IN RESPONSE, WHITEHALL IS
SAYING ONLY THAT CALLAGHAN SUPPORTS THE GENERAL IDEA OF
GISCARD'S PROPOSED SUMMIT, BUT HAS TAKEN NO POSITION AS
TO ITS TIMING, VENUE, OR PARTICIPANTS.

MEANWHILE, FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY
THAT THE UK WILL "SIT TIGHT" UNTIL CARTER EXPRESSES HIS

VIEWS--BUT THEY ARE DOING NOTHING TO DISCOURAGE TALK OF A LONDON VENUE. (CONFIDENTIAL) LONDON 230, 1/6.

2. AUSTRALIA: FRASER'S FIRST YEAR

IN A YEAR-END ASSESSMENT, EMBASSY CANBERRA REPORTS THAT PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S COALITION GOVERNMENT HAS LOST SOME PUBLIC SUPPORT, BUT REMAINS IN A VIRTUALLY UNAS-SAILABLE POLITICAL POSITION. ALTHOUGH THE OPPOSITION LABOR PARTY HAS BEEN LARGELY INEFFECTIVE, THE GOA IS TROUBLED BY ITS INABILITY TO MANAGE THE ECONOMY, WHICH HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION.

IN FOREIGN POLICY, AUSTRALIA HAS CAREFULLY MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US, MODERATED ITS CRITICISM OF THE USSR, AND SOMEWHAT REDUCED ITS TILT TOWARD CHINA IN THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE. RELATIONS WITH ITS ASIAN NEIGHBORS ARE GOOD.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, THE EMBASSY CAUTIONS THAT FRASER COULD ALWAYS BE UNSEATED BY THE VOLATILE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE AND SUGGESTS WE REMAIN FRIENDLY WITH THE LABOR PARTY, EVEN WHILE BENEFITING FROM OUR CLOSE TIES WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. (CONFIDENTIAL) CANBERRA 36, 1/5.

3. ISRAELI OFFICIAL VISITS ROMANIA

ISRAEL'S FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL AVINERI TRAVELED TO BUCHAREST JANUARY 5. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY CONFIDENTIAL

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TEL AVIV, AVINERI HOPES TO:

--DEMONSTRATE THAT A COMMUNIST COUNTRY, FRIENDLY WITH THE ARABS, CAN ALSO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL;

--ENHANCE THE CHANCES OF ROMANIAN JEWS IMMIGRATING TO ISRAEL; AND

--BE BRIEFED ON THE RECENT BUCHAREST VISITS OF SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER KHLEIFANI AND PLO LEADER ARAFAT. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) TEL AVIV 120, 1/6.

4. LIBERIA PONDERES DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH THE PRC

ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT TOLBERT, FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS HAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR CARTER THAT MONROVIA WILL SEND A "GOODWILL" MISSION TO PEKING TO LOOK INTO WAYS OF IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS. DENNIS PREDICTED THAT

FORMAL DIPLOMATIC TIES WOULD BE ESTABLISHED LATER THIS YEAR, DURING A RECIPROCAL VISIT BY A CHINESE MISSION. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE ONGOING TRADE AND ASSISTANCE

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PROGRAMS CURRENTLY BEING CARRIED OUT BY TAIWAN WOULD BE CONTINUED EITHER UNDER PEKING'S AUSPICES OR BY ALLOWING INDIVIDUAL TAIWANESE TO CONCLUDE CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS. (CONFIDENTIAL) MONROVIA 121, 1/6.

5. MALI: POSSIBLE COUP ATTEMPT, UPCOMING CABINET SHUFFLE

EMBASSY BAMAKO HAS HEARD RUMORS OF A DECEMBER COUP ATTEMPT BY MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ELEMENTS AND TALK OF A POSSIBLE CABINET SHUFFLE. AT THE SAME TIME, AN AUS-CONFIDENTIAL

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TRALIAN DIPLOMAT WAS TOLD BY FOREIGN MINISTER CISSOKO THAT, FOR SECURITY REASONS, FORMER PRESIDENT KEITA WILL REMAIN IN PRISON.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE POSSIBILITY THAT CIVILIANS MAY HAVE JOINED DISSIDENT MILITARY OFFICERS COULD INDICATE A MORE SERIOUS THREAT THAN PREVIOUS BARRACKS PLOTS. AS FOR A CABINET SHIFT, THE AIR OF EXPECTATION AMONG POLITICALLY-CONSCIOUS MALIANS HINTS THAT A CHANGE MAY BE FORTHCOMING. (CONFIDENTIAL) BANAKO 63, 1/6.
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